

DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1-20 are pending in this application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

3. **Claims 1-3, and 5-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Carolan et al. (Pub. No. US 2004/0133440 A1), hereinafter Carolan.**

4. With respect to claim 1, Carolan discloses an account server ([0157], lines 1-7, when a system handles membership features, a server is inherent; [0069], lines 1-4, resource sharing would require a server.) to manage a plurality of direct accounts for a plurality of resident users of the network community ([0157], lines 1-3) and at least one guest account for at least one guest of a

Art Unit: 4152

respective resident user ([0157], lines 1-4); a client (a computer used by an existing member) of a respective resident user of the network community configured to send to a non-resident user of the network community an invitation to become the guest of the respective resident user ([0182], lines 1-2; [0043], lines 3-4), wherein the account server is configured to create a guest account for the non-resident user after the sending of the invitation ([0157], lines 1-4).

5. With respect to claim 2, Carolan discloses receive an answer to the invitation from the non-resident user ([0182], lines 2-6, when a prospect registers, receiving an answer to the invitation is inherent); activate the guest account of the non-resident user ([0157], lines 1-4, when registering new members, activating the guest account is inherent) if the answer to the invitation is an acceptance of the invitation ([0182], lines 4-6, when a prospect registers, accepting the invitation is inherent); and delete the guest account of the non-resident user ([0113], lines 3-4) if the answer to the invitation is a declination of the invitation ([0113], lines 1-4, members are able to remove another from their personal community at any time, which may include declination of the invitation), wherein the invitation contains identification information about the non-resident user that is used to setup the guest account of the non-resident user ([0182], lines 11-13) and the invitation provides a mechanism for answering the invitation ([0182], lines 2-6).

Art Unit: 4152

6. With respect to claim 3, Carolan discloses the invitation is an email message ([0182], lines 2-4).

7. With respect to claim 5, Carolan discloses after occurrence of the end-date, offer a respective guest associated with the respective guest account an opportunity to convert the respective guest account into a new direct account ([0172], lines 1-10); schedule a cancellation date of the at least one guest account after receiving a request to cancel a respective direct account of the respective resident user sponsoring the at least one guest account ([0172], lines 1-13, when a member that has been added to another account request to be removed, the same process can be performed for a resident user, therefore, a request by a resident user to cancel a direct account is inherent); schedule a cancellation date of the at least one guest account after receiving a request, from the respective resident user sponsoring the at least one guest account, to cancel the at least one guest account of the at least one guest ([0172], lines 1-13, when a member that has been added to another account request to be removed, the same process can be performed for a resident user, a request by a resident user to cancel a guest account is inherent); and schedule a cancellation date of the at least one guest account after receiving a request, from the at least one guest associated with the at least one guest account, to cancel the at least one guest account ([0172], lines 1-3).

Art Unit: 4152

8. With respect to claim 6, Carolan discloses the request to cancel the at least one guest account ([0172], lines 1-3) is generated by an act of removing the at least one guest associated with the at least guest account ([0172], lines 1-3) from a roster list of the respective resident user ([0079], lines 1-4; [0087], lines 1-3).

9. With respect to claim 7, Carolan discloses the request to cancel the at least one guest account ([0172], lines 1-3) is generated by an act of removing the respective resident user ([0172], lines 1-3, when removing members that has been added to another account, the same process can be performed for a resident user, therefore, removing a resident user is inherent) from a roster list of the at least one guest ([0079], lines 1-4).

10. With respect to claim 8, Carolan discloses members of the network community utilize a common network service ([0005], lines 1-5; [0006], lines 1-4; [0030], lines 1-4; [0031], lines 1-3; [0032], lines 1-5 and 8-11), the members of the network community comprising the plurality of resident users and guests of the plurality of resident users ([0043], lines 1-9).

11. With respect to claim 9, Carolan discloses the network service is an Internet application ([0006], lines 5-7).

12. With respect to claim 10, Carolan discloses means for sending an invitation to a non-resident user to become a guest of a resident user ([0182], lines 1-2); means for managing a direct account of the resident user of the network community ([0157], lines 1-3) and a guest account of the guest user of

Art Unit: 4152

the network community ([0157], lines 1-4), the guest account sponsored by the resident user ([0157], lines 1-4); means for creating the guest account after sending the invitation to the non-resident user ([0157], lines 1-4) means for setting up the guest account with identification information contained in the invitation about the non-resident user (0182], lines 11-13).

13. With respect to claim 11, Carolan discloses means for answering the invitation ([0182], lines 2-6); means for activating the guest account ([0157], lines 1-4, when registering new members, activating the guest account is inherent) if the answer to the invitation is an acceptance of the invitation ([0182], lines 4-6, when a prospect registers, accepting the invitation is inherent); and means for deleting the guest account ([0113], lines 3-4) if the answer to the invitation is a declination of the invitation ([0113], lines 1-4, members are able to remove another from their personal community at any time, which may include declination of the invitation).

14. With respect to claim 12, Carolan discloses means for specifying an end-date for canceling the guest account ([0172], lines 1-10); means for, after occurrence of the end-date, offering the guest user an opportunity to convert the guest account into a new direct account ([0172], lines 1-10); means for, after receiving an acceptance to the invitation by the non-resident user, determining if the resident user has an available guest slot ([0171], lines 1-4, when a membership is designated a set number of members, "plus 1 more Basic or Premium Member", determining if a guest slot is available is inherent); and

Art Unit: 4152

means for activating the guest account if there is an available guest slot ([0157], lines 1-4; [0171], lines 1-4, when a membership is designated a set number of members, "plus 1 more Basic or Premium Member", determining if a guest slot is available is inherent).

15. With respect to claim 13, Carolan discloses means for scheduling a cancellation date of the guest account after receiving a request to cancel the direct account of the resident user who is sponsoring the guest account ([0172], lines 1-13, when a member that has been added to another account request to be removed, the same process can be performed for a resident user, therefore, a request by a resident user to cancel a direct account is inherent); means for scheduling a cancellation date of the guest account after receiving a request, from the resident user sponsoring the guest account, to cancel the guest account of the guest user ([0172], lines 1-13, when a member that has been added to another account request to be removed, the same process can be performed for a resident user, a request by a resident user to cancel a guest account is inherent); and means for scheduling a cancellation-date of the guest account after receiving a request, from the guest user, to cancel the guest account of the guest user ([0172], lines 1-3).

16. With respect to claim 14, Carolan discloses managing a direct account of the resident user ([0157], lines 1-3) and a guest account of a guest of the resident user ([0157], lines 1-4); sending an invitation to a non-resident user of the network community to become a guest of a resident user of the network

Art Unit: 4152

community ([0157], lines 1-4), wherein identification information about the non-resident user is provided to generate the invitation ([0182], lines 11-13); and: creating a new guest account for the non-resident user after sending the invitation to the non-resident user ([0157], lines 1-4), wherein the identification information is utilized to setup the new guest account ([0168], lines 1-4).

17. With respect to claim 15, Carolan discloses specifying an end-date for canceling the guest account ([0172], lines 1-10), wherein the end-date is stored in a data field contained in the guest account ([0172], lines 10-13); and after occurrence of the end-date, offering the guest an opportunity to convert the guest account into a new direct account ([0172], lines 1-10).

18. With respect to claim 16, Carolan discloses after receiving an acceptance to the invitation by the non-resident user, determining if the resident user has an available guest slot ([0171], lines 1-4, when a membership is designated a set number of members, "plus 1 more Basic or Premium Member", determining if a guest slot is available is inherent); and activating the new guest account if there is an available guest slot ([0157], lines 1-4; [0171], lines 1-4, when a membership is designated a set number of members, "plus 1 more Basic or Premium Member", determining if a guest slot is available is inherent).

19. With respect to claim 17, Carolan discloses receiving an answer to the invitation ([0182], lines 2-6, when a prospect registers, receiving an answer to the invitation is inherent); deleting the new guest account ([0113], lines 3-4) if the answer to the invitation is a declination of the invitation ([0113], lines 1-4,

Art Unit: 4152

members are able to remove another from their personal community at any time, which may include declination of the invitation); and activating the new guest account ([0157], lines 1-4, when registering new members, activating the guest account is inherent) if the answer to the invitation is an acceptance of the invitation ([0182], lines 4-6, when a prospect registers, accepting the invitation is inherent).

20. With respect to claim 18, Carolan discloses after detecting an act of removing the guest from a roster list of the resident user ([0172], lines 1-3; [0079], lines 1-4), scheduling a cancellation date of the guest account ([0172], lines 1-10); and after detecting an act of removing the resident user from a roster list of the guest ([0172], lines 1-3; [0079], lines 1-4), scheduling a cancellation date of the guest account ([0172], lines 1-10).

21. With respect to claim 19, Carolan discloses members of the network community utilize a common network service ([0005], lines 1-5; [0006], lines 1-4; [0030], lines 1-4; [0031], lines 1-3; [0032], lines 1-5 and 8-11); the members of the network community comprising resident users and guests of the resident users ([0049], lines 1-3).

22. With respect to claim 20, Carolan discloses the common network service is an instant messaging service ([0032], lines 1-5 and 8-11).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

23. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negatived by the manner in which the invention was made.

24. **Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Carolan as applied to claim 1 above, in view of Nichols et al. (Pub. No. US 2004/0103203 A1), hereinafter Nichols.**

25. With respect to claim 4, Carolan does not disclose the invitation is an instant message.

Nichols, however discloses the invitation is an instant message ([0034], lines 10-13, another form of communication is instant messaging).

Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the teachings of Carolan by instant messaging an invitation as taught by Nichols, in order to offer real-time communication.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Trevillian H. Highter whose telephone number

Art Unit: 4152

is (571) 270-3806. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Thursday 7:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Nabil El-Hady can be reached on (571) 272-3963. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

TH 12/18/2007

/Nabil El-Hady/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 4152